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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round
a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 262. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1873.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT HER MERCY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XV. CLIFF COTTAGE.

CLIFF COTTAGE—a residence whose appellation had something in it of the pride that apes humility, being in fact not a cottage at all, but a villa of considerable size—was situated a quarter of a mile or so beyond the last outskirts of Balcombe, in rather a remarkable position. The red sandstone rocks, of which the coast line was composed, were in that spot perpendicular, and had arranged themselves in a double line, one behind and above the other; and, on the plateau of turf that interposed between them, the house was placed. At back and front of it, therefore, there was a precipice of red rock; the head of the one in the clouds, and the foot of the other in the sea. A more romantic situation could scarcely have been imagined, nor indeed a more beautiful one, for so much of the plateau as was not occupied by the house itself was made into garden ground, where, under shelter from the upper cliff, even the least hardy flowers thrive and flourish. Sheer as this shelter was, its soft material was honeycombed by wind and weather into a thousand fantastic shapes, ranging from a deep-set monastic cell, to some weird likeness to lettering, such as that which showed itself on Belshazzar's wall. On the lower cliff a more powerful graver—Ocean—had hewn out echoing caverns, guarded by gigantic pillars, but nothing of this could be seen from "the cliff walk," as it was called, which ran round the garden, and only by a low stone wall was separated from the sheer abyss.

It was said that the sea was encroaching

upon Red Rock Bay, as the place was named, and that this fence had every five years or so to be removed, and placed more inland; but though such a consideration might, as Mr. Hulet laughingly remarked, "have affected a newly-married couple of the usual age," Cliff Cottage was likely to last his time, and that of Mrs. Sophia also; while as for the garden getting smaller every lustrum, it was probable that their power of taking walks in it would decrease at the same rate, or even quicker. He did not think it necessary to consult the interests of the two young ladies in the matter, since Judith was already engaged, and his opinion of his own sex, if not very high, was sufficiently so to give him confidence that Evy would soon find another lover, even if Lord Dirleton's "Jack" should play her false.

Unsolicited by Evy, for he was a man who did not need to be reminded of a promise, one of Mr. Hulet's first acts on taking possession of his new home was to make provision for Judith. His wife, indeed, had herself proposed to do so, but he would not hear of that. "It is I who have rendered the girl unnecessary to you," he argued, "and therefore it is my place to provide for her for the present; while as to the future, supposing that I survive you, I shall give effect, of course, to every wish that you may express respecting her."

But though a considerable sum had thus been placed at Judith's immediate disposal, she evinced no wish to throw herself at once into the arms of her Augustus, but contented herself with writing him epistles, doubtless of a most affectionate kind, which she always took to the post-office herself, as being too precious to be intrusted to a letter-bag. To Evy she explained this conduct as being dictated by

Augustus himself, "who is proud, dear fellow, as he is poor, and insists upon gaining a position for himself, as he feels he is on the road to do, before taking the hand which, thanks to you, has been so amply dowered." Evy thought this strange, conceiving that were she in Judith's place she would have found arguments to overcome such scruples, but she could not but applaud the delicacy of sentiment which such self-denial evidenced in the young painter, while her uncle (to whom, under the circumstances, she thought it right to disclose the matter) only shrugged his shoulders, and pronounced Augustus to be a much wiser fellow than he had taken him for.

Mr. Hulet, as we have seen, did not like Judith. Invalid old gentlemen—when their complaint is deafness—have sometimes, at unlucky moments, flashes of hearing, and, when they are almost stone blind, see things at times that might escape even the keen sighted; and Mr. Hulet, while neither deaf nor blind, had all the morbidly acute perceptions of an invalid. A glance of scorn, a movement of impatience at some unguarded moment, had probably prejudiced him against Judith. He could have heard the news of her approaching departure from Cliff Cottage with considerable resignation. The attitude of benefactor, in which she insisted upon placing him, embarrassed him exceedingly; while the humility in which she always clothed herself in her relations with his wife annoyed him even more, since it had a bad effect upon that lady in fostering those airs and graces, which in years ago so irritated him, and which it seemed she had discarded only during the short period of his second wooing. But still he bore with Judith as being, after all, but an insignificant item of the sum of ills which his own folly had brought upon himself. For to confess the truth, his reunion with the wife of his youth he had found to be a mistake—not to say an unmitigated failure. An occasional argument, with a political opponent, is well enough, and promotes a healthy tone of mind; but a member of the Commune would not be welcome to an admirer of the British House of Lords as a tenant of the same dwelling-house. Nay, it is even said that, the smaller the points of difference, the more fiercely are they apt to be discussed between persons so thrown together. And similarly, though nothing is more agreeable to a valetudinarian than to compare his ailments for a few hours with those of another invalid,

two persons living under the same roof, both afflicted with "nerves," are apt to quarrel. There is egotism in all illness; and an egotist requires a clear space about him, and especially one not occupied by another ego. The claims of such persons upon the attention of their fellow-creatures are apt to clash, and their wants to interfere with one another. The effect of their second experience of married life soon showed itself in the couple in question; Mrs. Hulet, in addition to her many physical maladies, fell into a chronic state of "protest." She assumed a silent, but very demonstrative attitude of suffering under oppression, and left it in no sort of doubt either to himself or to others as to who was the oppressor. Once, and only once, she had expressed this sentiment in words; it was on an occasion when he had forbade her going on the cliff walk without a companion—a really dangerous place at any time for one so shaky and short-sighted as herself, and especially so since it was her caprice to frequent it after dusk.

"Angelo," said she, in the presence, too, of both the girls, a circumstance which did not make the statement less unpleasant, "you always were a tyrant, and you always will be."

"No, my dear, I am no tyrant," was her husband's quiet rejoinder; "but I frankly allow that of late months—I don't know how many, it seems years—I have shown myself very weak, and, on one particular occasion, to be a most enormous fool." No epithet, indeed, was too gigantic for him to apply to that act of weakness which had caused him (to use his own words) once more to take to himself, for better or worse, a woman concerning whom he ought to have known there could have been no such alternative. A bachelor might marry without much prejudice to his judgment; a widower might do so, through a misunderstanding of the doctrine of chances, or a too sanguine confidence that he would have better luck next time; but that a man should take the same wife the second time—under the impression that she might have improved, like wine, with years—words, he said, failed him to express the profundity of contempt that he felt for such an idiot. It was not magnanimous in Mr. Hulet thus to speak, even if he could not help entertaining the sentiments described, and it did no good. Those who heard him retailed his words to others, and in due time they got round to his wife's ears, not, as may be imagined, to the improvement of

their mutual position. She grew more "aggravating" every day, and her husband more sour and irritated. The weak points in his character—which was a generous one in the main—were brought out under this course of treatment with painful distinctness. Irresolute, or resolute only by fits, in matters of moment, he was obstinate to excess in trifles. For example, being very careless in his habits, he had on one occasion left a glass of colourless but most powerful medicine in the dining-room, which, had he not chanced to return at the precise moment, would have been swallowed by Evy in mistake for a glass of water. Of this circumstance Mrs. Hulet made the most, not hesitating to make use of her husband's affection for Evy, who herself would gladly have passed over the affair in silence, as a weapon against him. "If even love for his niece could not restrain him from such acts of selfish carelessness, what motive could be expected to have weight with him," &c. In consequence of which rebuke it became Mr. Hulet's practice to leave his medicines about so recklessly, that a chance visitor to Cliff Cottage might well have been excused for taking it for a dispensary.

The cottage had many visitors, including not only the neighbours, who were very friendly, but many of their old acquaintances at Lucullus Mansion, almost all of whom were fixtures there. Among these Mr. Paragon was one of the most constant; he was seldom or never a guest, because Mr. Hulet disliked him, but for that very reason the mistress of the house encouraged his visits.

We have said that Judith's conduct towards her Augustus had seemed strange to Evy, but her behaviour to the Australian millionaire was a matter of much greater amazement. If, in fact, she had not known for certain that Judith's hand was engaged elsewhere, she would have thought it, if not the property of Mr. Paragon, at least to be had for the asking. It was no business of Evy's, of course, but this behaviour shocked her to that extent that she was driven to remonstrate with her young friend: a somewhat dangerous experiment, which, however, the other took in excellent part.

"There will be no hearts broken, my dear Evy, I promise you, however serious matters may appear. Mr. Paragon and I quite understand one another. And as for Augustus, he has all the confidence in me that I have in myself. And that," added she, with a little laugh that grated on her friend's ear, "is very considerable."

Evy, though by no means satisfied with this reply, said no more upon the subject, and the time was now drawing on towards an event which naturally monopolised her thoughts, to the exclusion of every other topic, namely, the April steeple-chases at Balcombe, for which she read in the local journal, with heartfelt joy, that Captain Heyton's Walltopper was entered.

CHAPTER XVI. IN WHICH MRS. HULET "COMES OUT" UNEXPECTEDLY.

UPON precisely "the day six months" after that on which the two lovers had parted from one another in Dirleton Park did the faithful Jack present himself at Cliff Cottage. Evy, of course, expected him. She knew from Mrs. General Storks that a new face had recently appeared at the table d'hôte, "and a very good-looking one too, except that he has had his hair not cut my dear, but mown, in consequence of an attack of brain fever, from the effects of which he has not recovered."

Evy, who was aware, from his portrait, that the deceased general had been wont to wear his hair flowing over his coat-collar, and to a considerable distance down his back, was prepared for her dear Jack's round head affording the widow some excitement, but the words "of which he has not recovered" alarmed her exceedingly. She had had no communication with the captain, and he might very easily have been taken ill without her knowledge. "Is he an invalid then?" asked she, mustering all the indifference at her command.

"Not in body, my dear, so far as I know," was the widow's rejoinder, "but certainly in mind. No man who is not mad would ride a steeple-chase, I suppose, unless he was paid for it; and that is what the captain has come to Balcombe to do. 'Going to ride his own horse, sir,' was what every man whispered to his neighbour down the long dinner-table at the mansion, and if he had been Shakespeare himself they could scarcely have regarded him with greater reverence. When I asked who the new-comer was of Mr. Paragon, he told me he was a 'gentleman rider,' which seems a very remarkable profession; the same thing, I suppose, as your 'gentleman farmer,' only on horseback?"

"Oh dear no," said Evy, "not at all the same thing;" and at once entered into an explanation and vindication of gentlemen riders with an enthusiasm worthy of the noblest cause. But though Evy had thus been made aware of the captain's presence

in Balcombe, and fully expected him at the earliest date on which his pledge to Lord Dirleton permitted him to visit her, his arrival, when it did take place, was nevertheless somewhat of a surprise.

Though she had slept but little on the previous night for thinking of him, she had come down-stairs calm and collected, and with the resolve not to reveal to anybody—and especially to Judith, who she fancied had been watching her of late with mischievous narrowness—the emotions that were thronging her gentle bosom. At the breakfast-table, over which, under pretence that Evy alone knew how to make his tea, she had been appointed to preside by Mr. Hulet, she officiated as usual; listening to the narration of old “symptoms” in aunt or uncle with exemplary patience, or sympathising with the new disorders with which one or other of them was for ever being threatened. After the morning meal her arm was offered to Aunt Sophia for the customary stroll on the cliff walk, an honour to which Evy had shown herself very averse, not on account of its inconvenience, but because she felt that she was taking Judith’s proper place in accepting it; but it had been thrust upon her. Mrs. Hulet manifested a very marked preference for her society over that of her late companion on all occasions—in which alone her husband was wont to observe his wife showed sense—and for Evy to protest against the expression of it only made matters worse.

“I beg you will not have any delicacy on my account,” Judith had plainly told her, “for it will not make your aunt’s behaviour to myself one whit less odious; it is quite clear that I have lost her favour, and that you have won it; wear it and welcome, my dear Evy; push her footstool, hand her salts, and listen to the wisdom of her Doctor Carambole; I have had enough of it all, I assure you, and resign my post to you without a pang of regret.”

Without regret, perhaps, yet not altogether, as Evy fancied, without some wound to her self-love. At all events, Judith’s behaviour towards her had certainly lost the cordiality it once possessed, for which she pitied, but did not blame her. And so it happened that on the eventful morning of which we speak, Evy and her aunt were promenading slowly up and down the cliff walk together, the latter silent and shivering in her shawls, though April at Balcombe had almost the warmth of June elsewhere in England, and the former silent also, but very thoughtful.

Dear Jack was coming, that was certain,

and with faithful purpose; but were the circumstances such as to allow of her permitting him to put that purpose into execution? Did it involve the sacrifice of his prospects and of his favour with his uncle, that was the question; above all, if it was so, would she have the courage to refuse him? It would be very, very hard to do so. For six long months she had not asked, she had not heard, the least tidings of him. With the exception of that conversation with Mr. De Coucy at the pic-nic, and of her unwilling confidence to Judith, she had not spoken of him to any one, and yet she had him as vividly before her eyes as on the eve of that day of their separation; still heard his loving words, still felt the kiss he had given her at parting on her faithful cheek.

That her uncle would be less willing to lose her than ever, she well knew; but also that his love for her was far too genuine to permit him to oppose her happiness. That rested, she felt convinced, with herself alone. Nothing would be easier—and certainly nothing more delightful—than to meet Captain Heyton, as in the hour in which he had bidden her adieu, as his plighted bride. But would not such behaviour be a proof that her love for him was not so genuine and unselfish as that of her uncle for herself? To this, indeed, her heart could not assent, for was it not throbbing at that instant with as genuine and unselfish love as ever beat in human breast? But from her heart she endeavoured to appeal to her conscience—her sense of duty. It would not be right to permit her lover to lose his fortune for her sake, and therefore, unless she knew that that sacrifice would not be demanded—unless he told her so with his first words—she would receive him, not coldly indeed, for that would be impossible, but with maidenly reserve and dignity. It would not be difficult, she thought, in the very expression of his face, to read how his suit with the old lord had sped; whether she was free to love him or not. If he wore a quiet resolute smile—the smile of one who is set upon a purpose though the loss is great—she also would be resolute to oppose it. While on the other hand if his looks showed—

“Evy!”

She stopped as suddenly as though like Daphne she had been rooted to the ground, causing her nervous companion to utter a shrill scream, under the impression perhaps that one or both of them had fallen over the cliff; but Evy did not hear it.

she only heard her name, and recognised the voice that uttered it.

"Evy!"

For one instant she saw him standing in the little drawing-room, at the French window that opened on the croquet ground, and the next he was across the lawn, clearing the flower-bed at a bound, and had clasped her in his arms. There was no time to learn from the expression of his features whether he was fated to have fifty thousand a year or only five hundred; but if happy looks are the index of a moneyed man, Jack Heyton must have been a millionaire at least. Not till she had returned his embrace with corresponding warmth did the recollection of her good resolutions occur to poor Evy, accompanied by the reflection that it had occurred too late.

"Dear me, dear me," gasped Mrs. Hulet.

"How you have made my heart go, young man! Evy, where's my salts?"

"A thousand pardons, madam," replied Jack, taking the little bottle of restoratives from Evy's fingers, and applying it with his own hand to the good lady's needs. "But your niece has made *my* heart go, and has it in her own possession, which must needs excuse the impetuosity of my conduct. My aunt, the late Lady Dirleton, used to be affected like yourself with palpitations, and I was always sent for—just like the doctor—because I was so conversant with her favourite remedies."

"Dear me, how nice of you!" ejaculated Mrs. Hulet, with the bluntness that habitual ill-health engenders. "How I wish that early in life I had met with some young man like you."

The idea that so eminent a person as Captain Heyton's aunt should have suffered from the same complaint as herself was doubtless grateful to the old lady's sense of dignity, but his attention to her physical exigencies—he was at that very moment fanning her with his wide-awake with all the delicate dexterity of a Japanese performing the butterfly trick—fairly carried her heart by storm. A man of the world would have taken it for granted that the captain had not got his uncle's consent, and felt the necessity for ingratiating himself in other quarters; but in the latter respect, at least, he would have been wrong. Jack was eminently "good-natured," and was always ready to help a lady, a term which he understood to apply to any one of the fair sex, whatever her social position.

Mrs. Hulet's naïve remark made both the young folks laugh heartily, and helped to put blushing Evy at her ease.

"So you did not expect me so soon," said the captain, gaily, when the old lady had been brought round.

"I thought you might not have come perhaps till the afternoon," answered Evy.

"There, you hear that," exclaimed Mrs. Hulet, smiling. "My niece expected you to leave your card with kind inquiries after her aunt and uncle, and then to ride away again, or, at least, she endeavours to persuade me so. I see how matters stand. An old woman like me is sadly in the way on these occasions; if you'll give me your arm to the house, Captain Heyton, you shall come back and have a walk with this young lady alone, for your reward."

Never, within Evy's knowledge of her, had her aunt evinced such liveliness and excitement, as she did on this occasion. "I like to make young people happy," continued she, as if in apology for her unwonted behaviour, "and though I have not been very fortunate myself I still entertain the greatest interest in the marriage lottery. Captain Heyton," added she, more gravely, as they slowly drew out of earshot of her niece, "you have gained a prize in Evy, such as falls to the lot of few men."

"I am sure of that," answered he, frankly; "I am also aware that I do not deserve it."

"I don't know about that," returned the old lady, kindly; "you seem to me to have a good heart. Though, indeed" (here she sighed deeply), "that is not enough to insure wedded happiness. You must be patient with her as well as kind, my young friend. 'Bear and forbear' should be the motto on every wedding-ring. Forgive me for speaking so plainly, and with such abruptness; my love for Evy must be my excuse. To-morrow, or even sooner, you will find out that I am nobody in this house, and my good advice will seem to you of no value. Good morning, sir."

As she spoke of her own troubles her manner, which had been singular warm and earnest, grew frigid, and her last words fell like three little blocks of ice. Jack raised her withered white hand to his lips, and kissed the finger tips.

"Though others may consider you 'nobody,' madam," returned he, with feeling, "there is one person, at least, whose esteem you have won to-day, and you will keep to his life's end."

"Thanks—hush! That is Mr. Hulet's voice. It is sad to have to say it, but if you would gain his favour I counsel you to show none to me."

The next moment Mr. Hulet appeared at the porched door, which opened on the garden, and as if in corroboration of his wife's words, his brow darkened at sight of the stranger upon whose arm his wife was leaning.

"Who is this young gentleman?" inquired he; "if at least you think it worth while to introduce your visitors to the personage who is humorously entitled the master of the house."

"Speak to him fairly, and don't cross him," whispered Mrs. Hulet, in an earnest whisper, at the same moment withdrawing her arm, and walking unassisted (as, indeed, she was perfectly competent to do) within doors.

"My name is Heyton, sir, Captain Heyton. We have met before more than once, Mr. Hulet."

"Indeed, then, I had forgotten it," returned the other, coldly. "I remember you now, and conjecture the cause of your present visit. Don't you think it would have been more becoming, under the circumstances, Captain Heyton, if, instead of making your way yonder"—he pointed to where Ery was standing—"if, instead of seeking out my niece, or endeavouring to secure Mrs. Hulet's good offices on your behalf, you had come, in the first instance, to me?"

"Indeed, Mr. Hulet, I endeavoured to do so," answered the captain, with a humility that did his self-restraint great credit. "It was for you, and you alone, I asked, and the servant left me in yonder room, from which, however, seeing the ladies walking in the garden, I thought it no harm to join them."

"It might have been, it may be still, great harm, sir. However, perhaps you will now favour me with a few minutes' private conversation in my study, before rejoining Miss Carthew, if, that is, you succeed in making it clear to me that it is advisable that you should rejoin her."

It is not always the best plan for establishing your position in a house to cultivate the good graces of the junior partner.

THE HOUSE OF HABSBURG.

SOME seven or eight miles above Vienna, on the bank of the Danube, lies the little town of Klosterneuburg, of easy access to lazy people by carriage, rail, or steamer, and a pleasant and not too severe promenade for the fanatical pedestrian, provided he can find his way through the by-

paths past the Krapfenwald, over the Kahlenberg, and down the Weidling Glen. The atmosphere of this Cloister New Town seems charged with lethargy, as is usually the case in places where monks have built their nest, and the neighbouring slopes are rich with the vine, which is also usually and curiously the case where holy men have secluded themselves for the more perfect contemplation of heavenly things. In Roman Catholic countries generally, and in Austria in particular, the best wine is grown in the monks' vineyards, and Klosterneuburg, no exception to the rule, is particularly noted for the quality of its wines, red and white, and in such quantity, that the local humorists have nicknamed it "Zum Rinnenden Zapfen," which signifies the sign of "The Running Tap."

The town, on first impression, might well be called Sleepy Hollow, were it not that one discovers, on a better acquaintance, a number of circumstances that militate against repose. It is the head-quarters of the Pioneer Regiment, with its pontoon train, and during the drill season there is an everlasting throwing of bridges over the Danube, and breaking them up again, going on at all hours. Through the summer and autumn sight-seers and tourists are intermittent, and the Vienna cockney is chronic, especially on Sundays and holidays.

The first objects that strike the beholder on approaching the town, either from the river or from the hills, are the gigantic copper imitations of the imperial crown and archducal hat, perched on the top of a huge pile of building, blazing in the sunlight, and symbolic of the power and grandeur of the House of Austria. The history and traditions of the old and the present reigning families, of Babenberg and Habsburg alike, are intimately associated with the place and its rich old Augustine monastery.

Leopold, the Godly Babenberg, patron, saint, and protector in chief—Nepomucene and Florian kindly assisting him in his duties—of the Austrian archduchies, lies buried in the church of the monastery, which he was induced to found by the miraculous interposition of a piece of his wife's paraphernalia. The tale, even for a monkish one, is remarkable for its silly triviality; but it is not to be lightly doubted by a presuming heretic or free-thinker, for it is a leading article of belief in the Lerchenfelder religion. Leopold and his wife Agnes were one day standing de-

voutly meditating on the site of a monastery which the latter had made up her mind to found, influenced thereto by the pure and disinterested promises of her ghostly confessor, that such an act would assuredly open to her the gates of salvation. The wind, however, cut short their meditations by carrying away the markgräfin's veil, which, judging by the long but ineffectual search made for it, must have been of considerable value to the lady. This circumstance would seem to have restored the world and its vanities to the uppermost place in her thoughts, for nothing further was done in the matter of the foundation for nine years; at the end of which time her husband, whose piety was never allowed to interfere with his sport, though he managed to blend the two in a very edifying manner, found the veil out hunting. Unharmful by time or exposure, it was fluttering from the branches of an elder-tree, on the spot where now stands Klosterneburg. Whereupon conscience and the priests reproached the markgraf for his worldly backsliding, which Providence had obviously checked in such a miraculous manner; and he straightway proceeded to found the monastery on the site where the veil was found. The believer in miracles and relics will no doubt be much solaced by a sight of the veil and tree-stump, preserved and exhibited by the worthy fathers.

The passion for building has been, and is still, no doubt hereditary, along with some other peculiarities, in all the rulers of Austria, from Jasomirgott to Franz Josef. The greatest builder of them all, the last sovereign of the male line of Habsburg, and father of Maria Theresa, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, erected the present stately pile, meaning to use it as his summer residence, but, as moneys had become scarce, he was never able to complete his grand designs. Another Habsburg, the Archduke Maximilian (fourth son of the Emperor Maximilian the Second), Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, and twice elected King of Poland, but unable to maintain his right, dedicated the archducal hat "out of devotion"—but by what right is not quite apparent—to Saint Leopold, and implored the protector in chief to take care of it. In other words he handed over the custody of his father's state head-gear to the monks, who have managed ever since to make the utmost capital possible out of the archducal piety or necessities, by averring that the

hat belongs to the convent, and not to the imperial house. They have succeeded so far in this curious pretension, that whenever the hat is required in order to have homage rendered to the wearer: as Archduke of Austria at coronations, or on other occasions, the emperor, as archduke, has to beg the loan of it, which is of course always granted, but not without a great deal of ceremonial palaver, eating, drinking, and posturing. When the hat is wanted, two commissioners of the real old Austrian noble stock, or the nearest obtainable approach to that phenomenon, arrive from Vienna in a coach and six, with an escort of cavalry. To receive them with all honours, the citizens parade "in buff and bandolier," or whatever is the equivalent for them now-a-days, and the whole brotherhood, from the abbot to the scullion, is assembled before the monastery gates. After effusive and long-winded compliments on both sides, commissioners and all go to Saint Leopold's chapel to hear mass, and sing a *Te Deum*. Then the bishop of the diocese, crosier in hand, gives audience in the throne-room to the visitors, and asks them, with well-simulated gravity and innocence, what may be the nature of the business that has brought them to Saint Leopold's shrine. Then the commissioners, keeping up their parts in the comedy with much spirit, inform the "well-beloved, pious, and faithful," that the old archduke is dead—a fact known for several weeks, or months, as the case may be, to the whole world—and that the new one wants the loan of his own old hat. This request appearing perfectly reasonable to the bishop, he solemnly declares his conviction that there is no just cause or impediment why he should not have it, and the chapter, with beautiful unanimity, record their compliance. After this comes the only sensible part of the proceedings, when all adjourn to the banquet-hall, where they are not regaled with lentils, and where they drink a very fair quantity of the best of the "*Prälatten-wein*" to the eternal health and glory of the House of Austria.

It shows great faith in the heads of the parties concerned, or in the excellence of the prelate's wine, that the examination and verification of the hat and its appendages should take place immediately after this symposium. The commissioners produce the old "protocol," in which the hat with its sable tags, its large blue sapphire on the top, its pearls, rubies, and emeralds are all set forth with minute detail. When

everything is examined, verified, sealed, and protocolled over again, the hat is packed away in its red leathern case, locked up and carried to the gate by the dean and two acolytes, and formally handed over to the imperial, royal, and archducal commissioners. The case is then placed on a litter borne between two mules, under the special guardianship of a dozen full-blooded noble troopers of the guard, and, followed by commissioners, trumpeters, horsemen, footmen, buglers, the general gaping public, and the bishop's empty carriage, it is conveyed to the gates of Vienna. The restoration of the hat to the shrine is conducted much in the same pompous fashion, though with not quite so much elaborate ceremony.

More labour and research have been expended on the early descent of the Habsburgs, than on that of any other house that ever reigned in Europe, which may partly be accounted for by the very prominent share which these sovereigns have always taken in European politics—a prominence to be ascribed, however, more to the exigencies created by the heterogeneous elements of the nations brought under their sway, and the dynastic and religious complications arising therefrom, than to any great or noble qualities ever exhibited by the rulers themselves (Charles the Fifth and Joseph the Second excepted) since Rudolf laid the foundations of the family fortunes. He was in himself ancestor enough for half a dozen houses, and could easily afford, as far as history is concerned, to dispense with a grandfather. As the first Napoleon once silenced a caviller by the assertion, "I am an ancestor; my patent of nobility dates from the battle of Montenotte!" so might Rudolf have begun with himself, and dated his patent from the bloody victory of the Markfeld. His descendants, with the aforesaid exceptions of Charles the Fifth and Joseph the Second, have not contrived among them all to throw much additional lustre on the dynasty. They might, therefore, have also been reasonably contented with this patent without priding themselves individually on being merely the tenth or twentieth "transmitter of a foolish face." Napoleon never lost an opportunity of discharging his rude sarcasms at the "Olympic pride" of "ce vieux ganache," as he once politely, in conversation with Maria Louisa, termed her father, that haughty Habsburg, whom the inexorable logic of facts had alone compelled to accept him, "a person of no birth what-

ever," as his son-in-law. His farewell snub to Francis, delivered in the presence of the "parterre" of German kings and princelets at Dresden, before setting out for the campaign of Moscow, was very Napoleonic and the reverse of soothing—"Je suis le Rodolphe de Hapsbourg de ma famille."

Guillemannus, in his *Habsburgiacum*, or *Treatise on the Origin of the House of Austria*, Fugger, Peireskius, and Hergott, are the best known writers on Rudolf's ancestry, but among the crowd of obscurer flatterers there is one lunatic who deserves a passing laugh before noticing the accounts of the more reasonable compilers. As Kohl admiringly observes: "Many historiographers have laboured for the glorification of the old House of Austria, but none have gone about their work in a way to be at all compared to Johann Rasch's." Less inspired or gifted genealogists have been satisfied to carry the pedigree modestly only to the Romans, but no meaner cradle than the Ark, or lower descent than that from Ararat, could appease the lofty ambition of Rasch, who was a teacher in the Scottish convent in Vienna, and lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The magnificent library of the monastery of *Klosterneuburg* is rich with some twenty-five thousand volumes and four hundred manuscripts of rare and curious works, and among them is to be found the precious *Chronica Austriæ* of this wonderful instructor of posterity. It is doubtful if there exists in this or any other collection another piece of humbug so unique of its kind as this compilation, although heralds and genealogists are famous enough for such efforts of genius. The *Chronica Austriæ* would be a capital burlesque if it were not, to all appearance, outwardly and inwardly intended for grave history. Notwithstanding that the volume is printed and got up in the best style of the last century, and written with a species of sober insanity, it may, after all, be really meant for a bit of sly monkish humour. There are many items of curious information, not generally known, regarding things that occurred, and men who flourished on the earth before the Deluge, which are not to be found in any other history, sacred or profane; but as no authorities are cited, the reader must take them all with pure faith as matters of inspiration. By Father Rasch's account the House of Austria can indubitably trace its pedigree back to the

first mariner and navigator on record, for he gives an unbroken chain of rulers in direct descent from Noah. Forty "heathen," and several Hebrew princes, with the different variations of their names and their aliases, are ranged in imposing files, with their various coats of arms. It is perhaps a little startling at first sight to find Noah and his sons called heathens, which in the commonly received acceptance of the term would imply they were Turks or other mis-believers, and can only be accounted for by the fact that the original meaning of the word *heide*, heathen, was derived from the wild, waste, or forest in which he dwelt. After the Jews, the crazy chronicler seems to be at fault in his genealogical scent, and shuffles out of the dilemma by merely noting that "heathen princes again ruled in Austria, and certainly not fewer than seven." These are succeeded by one hundred Christians, commencing with a certain Rolantin, and going down to eleven Babenbergers and fifteen Habsburgers. To make up for his want of authorities he is very particular in his dates, as when he states that "eighteen hundred and seven years after the creation of the world, one hundred and fifty after the Deluge, and two thousand one hundred and fifty-six before the birth of Christ, Tuisco brought a great people with him from Armenia, Germans and Wendes, among whom were twenty-five counts, and about thirty princes." As far as the name, and the name only, of the leader of these immigrants is concerned, he would seem to have condescended to temper his own exuberant imagination with the scarcely more trustworthy fancies contained in the old legends collected by Tacitus, as mentioned in all German histories. In the first century after Christ, the Roman historian heard from the Germans on the Rhine that the common ancestor of their people was called *Thuisco* or *Thusto*, and sprang from the earth. *Thuisco* is evidently derived from *Thuit*, *Thiot*, the people, as is also the name of his son *Mannisko*, from *Mann*, a man. The appellation of this mythical ancestor, it may naturally be supposed, was adopted by many of his descendants, and in time, among other modifications or corruptions, would appear as *Ethico*. In the seventh century there did exist an *Ethico*, Duke of Alsace, who, with a certain degree of probability, is claimed as ancestor of Rudolf, and it is likely enough that the more extravagant pedigree-maniacs may have muddled him up with the apocryphal progenitor of

the whole Teutonic race. The passion for hunting up ancestors, real or imaginary, has always been a hereditary weakness of the members of this house, and it is therefore no great matter for wonderment that plenty of sycophants and expectant pensioners were ready to hand to pander to it. The most notable indulger in this passion was the Emperor Maximilian the First, husband of the beautiful Mary of Burgundy, and grandfather of Charles the Fifth. He not only employed others to make out his pedigree, but he invented one for himself, entitled a *Genealogical Chronicle of the Austrian Family*, which he dictated among other works to his private secretary, Grunbeck. Maximilian sent forth seven wise men, all learned historiographers, through Germany, to search, what were in those days the only sources of information, the archives of convents and abbeys, in order to collect materials for the genealogies of his ancestors, and to examine the resting-places of the dead for monumental inscriptions that would throw any light on the subject. The result of these labours was about a dozen pedigrees, the most learned of which went back to Adam and Eve, though they are by no means so amusing or ingenious as Johann Rasch's magnum opus. This vehement pursuit of his dead ancestors induced a cynical wag to write on the wall of the imperial court-yard the lines, of which the following is the well-known English version:

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

The emperor's common sense, provoked by the doggerel, would seem to have been touched for the moment by the absurdity of his hobby, for he wrote underneath:

Ich bin ein Mann wie ander Mann,
Nur mir das Gott die Ehre gann.

Maximilian's grandiose idea, as expressed in his own words, was to "*outdo Julius Cæsar, and to be semper e familiâ Caroli Magni.*" Charlemagne was somehow or other to be made one of his ancestors, and his avidity and perseverance in claiming kinship with all the royal families in Europe, extinct or flourishing, were marvellous and indefatigable. Because his mother Eleanor was a princess of Portugal, and great-grand-daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and because John of Gaunt's grandmother was a French princess, and his father took the style of King of France, he quartered on his escutcheon the

arms of Portugal, England, and France with those of Spain. Besides the arms of Hungary and Bohemia, he appropriated those of the Byzantine Empire, for he argued that the Holy Roman Empire was one and indivisible, and that the Eastern portion had been only separated from the Western "owing to the arrogance of the Greek Church, wherefore God had punished the Byzantine Empire, and subjected it to the heathen, and King Maximilian or his descendants might hope in a short time to reconquer it." And if any further right were necessary to quarter these arms, he claimed relationship with the imperial family of the Palæologi. Notwithstanding these and various other industrious but eccentric literary vagaries of royal, noble, learned, and mad authors and pedants, the only authentic facts connected with Rudolf's ancestry are that he was the son of Albert the Fourth, Count of Habsburg, and can trace his line back without any question to Guntram the Rich, Count of Alsace and Brigau, who lived in the tenth century. There is also a slight amount of plausibility in the claim set up to carry it still further back, as has been before mentioned, to Ethico, Duke of Alsace, who flourished in the seventh century. Owing to the very considerable amount of promiscuous slaughtering and plundering that went on among the class, in which the members of the modern European haute-volée are so delighted and proud to detect and establish an ancestor, castles and lands changed lords, and one title went down and another up, with such pantomimic rapidity, that the history of these vicissitudes degenerates into a sort of harlequinade. It is consequently very difficult to trace with satisfactory accuracy the titles and possessions of Guntram's immediate descendants. His son Kanzeline appears to be known as Count of Altenburg, and to have managed to live on his property at Windisch, the site of the old Roman station of Vindonissa, on the banks of the river Aar, in Switzerland. Radebot, or Radbot, a son of Kanzeline, was known as Count of Kleggau, and has the credit, with some writers, of having built the Stammhaus, or cradle of the family. But the celebrated Acta Foundationis of the monastery of Muri, in the Canton of Aargau, founded by another son of Kanzeline, Werner, Bishop of Strasburg, leave it beyond doubt that Werner himself, and no one else, erected the Castle of Habsburg in the beginning of the eleventh century on a hill above Windisch. Rad-

boton's eldest son dying without issue, his second son, Werner, who was the heir of his uncle, Bishop Werner, is the first of the family who is clearly designated in the old records as Count of Habsburg. The descendants of this Werner married, increased, murdered, or were murdered, fought, robbed, and waxed rich in the orthodox style of those cheerful times, until 1232, when Count Rudolf dying, his two sons, Albert the Fourth and Rudolf, divided the patrimony between them. Albert kept the territories in Alsace and Aargau with the Stammschloss of the family. Rudolf took Kleggau, the lands in the Brigau, Rheinfelden, and Lauffenburg. Albert the Fourth married Hedwige, daughter of the Count of Kyburg, and became father of Rudolf, the great founder of the imperial royal line of Austria. Rudolf, younger brother of Count Albert the Fourth, fixed his residence at Lauffenburg, and became founder of the line of Habsburg-Lauffenburg, from which are descended the Earls of Denbigh. According to the great Sir Bernard, the English Habsburgs settled in this country in the reign of Henry the Third, and the cause of their coming is explained in an ancient manuscript, written about the time of King Edward the Fourth, in which it appears that Geffery or Godfrey, Count of Habsburg, having been reduced by the characteristic rapacity of his cousin Rudolf, King of the Romans, to the extreme depths of poverty, one of his sons, also a Geffery, came to England, fought for King Henry in his wars, and assumed the surname of Fieldeng or Filding, from his father's patrimony of Rheinfelden. With the usual luck of his family, he obtained, on account of his services, and also out of the king's compassionate feelings for his case, "considerable support in rents and fees, lying in divers places," which his descendants, with the same proverbial family luck, increased from time to time, by marriages and grants. Lord Denbigh is described by Ulster as "Count of Hapsburg-Lauffenberg and Rheinfelden in Germany," and as such, a count of the Holy Roman Empire, in which statements, however, neither the Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Gräflichen Häuser, nor the Historisch-Heraldisches Handbuch appear to support him. The member of the English Habsburgs best known to fame is Henry Fielding, the novelist.

Albert the Fourth, Count of Habsburg, turned Crusader, and died of the plague at

Askalon, in 1240. Before setting out for Palestine he gave much pious and worldly advice combined to his sons. They were to cultivate truth and piety, and shun evil counsellors; never to go to war without extreme necessity, but once engaged therein, to act with courage and firmness; to be swift in action, and to prefer peace to their own private gain. His descendants certainly cultivated such piety as is taught by the Jesuits; but in courage not many of them could be counted as paladins, while, as a rule, they have acted in the very contrary sense to every other of the above precepts.

"Be mindful," said the paternal monitor, "that the Counts of Habsburg did not attain their height of reputation and glory by fraud, insolence, or selfishness, but by courage and devotion to the public weal. As long as you follow their footsteps you will not only retain, but augment the possessions and dignities of your illustrious ancestors." By a remarkable irony of fate his descendants have succeeded amazingly in life by adopting a course of action, which cannot in any way be reconciled with their ancestor's exhortations. No sooner was Albert dead, than Rudolf, flinging his good counsels to the winds, commenced that long career of turbulent and selfish aggression which marked him out as "great" among his fellow-men, and eventually mounted him on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. He collected adventurers and desperadoes from all parts to his standard, and made himself a terror, or an aid, to his neighbours, as his own interests dictated. He protected the adjacent states from the inroads of banditti, or of barons not much better than banditti. Under various pretexts he acted the part himself of a knightly bandit. He turned his arms against his paternal and maternal uncles; from the former he got as much as he gave, but from the latter he managed to extort money for his necessities, though he was foiled for the present in any further exactions, for the Count of Kyburg made over his territories, as fiefs of the see, to the Bishop of Strasburg, to avoid losing them to his rapacious nephew. Rudolf then harried the possessions of the Bishop of Basle, entered the city by night, and burnt down a nunnery, for which he was excommunicated by Pope Innocent the Fourth. In expiation he served in a crusade, conducted by Ottokar, whose rival and conqueror he subsequently became, against the pagan Prussians. Afterwards he as-

sisted the same monarch against Bela, King of Hungary. On his return home he mixed himself up in a series of feuds in Switzerland, and, with cunning zeal, helped the Bishop of Strasburg against the citizens, and beat them. He now made friends with the uncle he had so sorely bullied, persuading him to ask back the grant of his territories from the bishop, and on the refusal of the latter, he sided with the citizens against the prelate, who died of disgust at the losses and defeats inflicted on him by his former ally. His successor in the see prudently restored the estates. Rudolf, unable to remain quiet, got himself appointed prefect or protector of the city of Zurich and of the forest cantons, in which capacity he embroiled himself with a powerful league of barons. Before the war with this confederation was concluded, the Abbot of St. Gallen summoned him to do homage for the inheritance derived from his uncle, Hartmann of Kyburg. On his refusal, the angry priest marched against him, and, at the same time, he received intelligence that the citizens of Basle, instigated by his old enemy, their bishop, had massacred some nobles of his family and party, after a tournament given by his cousin of Lauffenburg. With wily address he hastened to make peace with the Abbot of St. Gallen, and even succeeded in securing his assistance against Basle. While encamped before the walls of Basle, into which he had driven the bishop and his adherents, he was awakened in his tent at midnight by his nephew, Frederick of Hohenzollern, Burggraf of Nürnberg, with the news that he was unanimously chosen King of the Romans by the electors of Germany. This Frederick of Hohenzollern had been one of the most active partisans of Rudolf in securing his election, and was an ancestor of the present Emperor of Germany. By a curious coincidence a Hohenzollern was foremost in giving the control over the affairs of Germany to the Habsburgs, and another Hohenzollern, his direct descendant, was their supplanter on the field of Königsgrätz, when in the course of time and things their imperial rôle had come to be played out. Rudolf, however, could not foresee this, and, he at least, had succeeded finally, at the ripe age of fifty-five, in planting the roots of the Habsburg stock, to grow and flourish into a tree of goodly girth and stature for nearly six centuries at the head of Germany. When the citizens of Basle heard of Rudolf's election, totally disre-

garding the desperate remonstrances of their bishop, they hastened to open their gates and submit, saying, "We have taken up arms against the Count of Hapsburg, and not against the King of the Romans." The astounded and mortified prelate, forgetting his dignity and his apostolic calling, and thinking only of his enemy's good luck, struck his forehead in a fury, and irreverently exclaimed, "Sede fortiter, Domine Deus, vel locum Rudolfus occupabit tuum!"

AUT CÆSAR AUT NULLUS.

CÆSAR or nullus! Brother, say not so;
By such mad speech thou dost thy soul much wrong:
Such words are not for thee, who art too strong,
Manly, and true to let thyself sink low,
Missing the highest. There is bitter wee
For every son of man who turns his back
On his ideal; therefore, though the track
Lead to no regal goal, still onward go.
Not thine to fix how high thy state shall be,
Nor thine, perchance, to feel the Cæsar crown
Clasping thine upturn'd brow; thou ne'er may'st see
The purple from thy shoulders falling down.
But it is thine to live right royally,
King of thyself, and gain a king's renown.

A LONDON PILGRIMAGE AMONG THE BOARDING-HOUSES.

VI. AN ARTISTIC SHELTER.

PAGET HOUSE consists of several houses run into one, and is large and imposing. It possesses a flaunting wide front in a principal thoroughfare of the artist quarter, and its prevailing characteristics are stuffiness and gloom combined with an odour of decomposed toast-and-water. Indeed, on entering its portals you feel as though suddenly plunged into the centre of a mildewed pillow, or as though you were spending a wet night in a leaky omnibus among the damaged straw. Wall and floor and staircase wear a dissipated, up-all-night, gin-and-water look. Sundry very old masters, and an early effort or two of some once rising artist whose broken heart has mouldered into dust, blacken on the smoky walls, crooked, awry, and desolate. Time-worn oil-cloth, from which all pattern has long since vanished, decorates the hall. The stairs, which have not been washed for years, act as a calendar of long devoured beefsteaks, bearing on their surface greasy indications of trodden-down fat dropped off plates by careless servants. In ambush at corners of steps are little heaps of flue, portions of garments of lodgers passed away, torn off by the innumerable headless nails that crop up through the plaster everywhere. Broken busts, and sketches

for statues which no one would order, encumber the landings, trying to shroud their false proportions from view under a decent cobweb mantle. Rusty moreen portières festoon the drawing-room doors; blinds once fair and white, now stained and speckled with many finger marks, adorn the staircase windows. A wan waiter in soup-smeared garments, with dasky towel under arm, receives you at the door, and conducts you with patient air, as though sighing to himself softly, "Yet another victim," into the sanctum of Mrs. Jopkins, who sits in fearful deshabelle among her maids, giving orders for the day. She is old and fat and damp, is Mrs. Jopkins, wheezy and scant of breath, innocent of cap, with short grey hair screwed with paper into little tails all over her head, like half-developed quills on a baby porcupine.

"Yes, you can have a room by the week, with complete board, at thirty shillings. Oxtail soup, Mary, with plenty of pepper. Gibbs, show the gentleman his room, three-pair back, number sixteen. Too much soap used this week, Jane, and the washing's ridiculous. If the boarders will spill their food over the tablecloth so much the worse for them. When coals are so dear we must take it out in washing. One clean tablecloth a week's enough in all conscience. It's them dirty brats that does it. We won't have no more children here, that's flat."

"Oh, ma! don't be absurd," ejaculates a deep voice close by, and Miss Jemima Jopkins makes her appearance rattling a bunch of keys. She is an old young lady with a quantity of false hair, piled like a Tower of Babel on her head, high cheek-bones, a dress that was once smart, no cuffs or collar, and not overclean hands. "Where should we be without the children? They brighten us up. I do love children!" and her chaste bosom heaves a gentle sigh. "A new lodger. Are you coming to breakfast? The bell will ring presently."

I follow the wan waiter up the stuffy stairs, tumbling over brooms, and boots, and clothes laid out to brush on chairs, and mysterious plates pushed out of room doors, bearing signs of strange overnight orgies of bacon and poached eggs. My room is small and exceedingly grimy; it boasts a bed covered with a dirty counterpane, one chair, one crazy table, scant washing arrangements spread on a chest of drawers, old flowered curtains washed out and tattered, and festoons of cobwebs about a window thick-crustured with dirt-

tears of years. I feel like Baron Trenk at Madame Tussaud's, and expect hoary mice and veteran blackbeetles to come wandering about my feet, but a cracked bell suddenly echoes through the house, doors open and shut, feet patter over the stones, and I, too, obey the call to breakfast. Surely that dining-room is the very centre of the mouldy pillow! The windows cannot have been opened for days, fumes of last week's boiled beef hang about the cornice, the worn carpet is redolent of fried ham, whilst the tablecloth!

Miss Jopkins occupies the head of the long table, in front of a portentous array of teacups and tin pots of tea and coffee. A frisky old lady sits at her right hand, a lady with roses in her cap, bands of purple hair across a heavily ploughed forehead, a good many old-fashioned rings, an effigy of an eye as a brooch upon her bosom, one or two hair bracelets, a soupçon of beard, and a massive gold chain and ponderous watch. Opposite to her is a burly Irishman, an ex-Indian officer, with a loud voice, and Milesian twinkle in his eye, which belies the fierce curl of a white moustache; beside him sits his faded little wife, and beyond a dyspeptic sculptor, also Irish, upon whom the art goddess has evidently not smiled. Beyond him again are two painters of the long-haired, black-nailed school, now happily almost extinct. At the extreme end of the table, visible over a vista of toast-racks, boiled eggs, and plates of cold meat, Signor Merella, one of the champion trapezists, his hair curled with tongs, with an Italian wife and two children. A pale young man, red-haired, whose sole occupation seems to be the continuous use of a tooth-pick, completes the party, for, as Miss Jemima explains, all who can afford it are out of town, and one or two are ill upstairs.

"Tea or coffee, Mrs. Goram? Gibbs, don't leave the room, your attendance may be required."

This to the wan waiter, whose patient aspect changes not as he deprecatingly shifts his weight from one foot to the other, and whisks his towel with a despondent phantom of alacrity under the other arm.

"Meejor M'Carthy, I've a little surprise for you this morning," observes the frisky lady with a little laugh, jumping nimbly up and drawing from some hidden receptacle a plate of pickled salmon. "You are always talking of your love of fish, and here's some for you."

"Madam, I don't know what I've done

to deserve this attention. My dear, thank Mrs. Goram. Perhaps Miss Jemima will join us in a slice. Very thoughtful indeed, I'm sure."

Here the dyspeptic sculptor woke into something resembling the liveliness of a tortoise, his bloodshot eyes rolled round a moment, and he offered Mrs. Major M'Carthy a piece of his private toast, much as a schoolboy lends his knife to the recipient of a cake from home.

"My dear, accept a slice of Mr. M'Grath's own peculiar. It is very superior, toasted by himself. Will Mr. M'Grath join us in a little bit of salmon?" And so the ruse was successful, and the sculptor's longing properly appeased. It appears the fashion at Paget House for every one to gloat over his particular delicacy, to bring from his den up-stairs some special tit-bit that shall fill the souls of the others with envy, and to mark stately courtesy or shades of dislike by stiff offers of small fragments thereof, or to wither up enemies by slowly devouring it all before their tantalised gaze.

And now the conversation became general, and was quite amazing from its vapidty. Mrs. Goram, with many a smirk, told of her terrific adventure in taking a wrong turning out of Oxford-street, and of the disasters that thereupon ensued, until her rescue by a timely omnibus. Miss Jopkins was quite hysterical over a coming meeting with an old school friend, remarking in her deep voice, with a youthful gurgle, "and you know what gurls are like when they get together!" Miss Jopkins's facial expression, by-the-way, is very fine; she can go through an entire gamut at a moment's notice, passing from ethereal innocence into deep Kemble-like reproaches aside to long-suffering Gibbs, and then, should occasion arise, as rapidly assuming an absorbed aspect of attention like Joan of Arc desecrating visions, or a virgin martyr at the stake. Her treatment of the boarders, too, is a masterpiece of infinite diplomacy. She smiles and blushes at honest Major M'Carthy, as she hands his second cup of tea, modestly veiling the brightness of her eyes. With Mrs. Goram she is confidential and familiar, pressing her gouty old hands gushingly, and breathing artless confidences into her ear. To the dyspeptic sculptor, who has long since swallowed his salmon, and now looks ruefully at his empty plate, she speaks with a tinge of hauteur; while for Signor Merella's benefit

her nose seems to shorten up, and her cheek-bones to protrude like twin aggressive cliffs, until her eye falling on the children, her hard face softens again, and perhaps she thinks of the husband she might have had years ago when that hair and lovely bloom were all real, before she finally settled down to her mother's business to drone through an ugly sleep-life, like some hapless princess for whom the fairy prince refused to come.

But though Miss Jopkins's life may be dull, what is her dreariness to that of poor Gibbs, the forlorn one? It is his business to be bullied by every one, to do everything, and be everywhere at one and the same moment; to clean prairies of boots; to fetch up breakfasts until it shall be time to fetch up luncheons; to go on at that, with intervals of knife-cleaning, until dinner-time; to sit up till long past midnight, his cheeks ash-coloured, and his eyes bleared with watching boarders feeding on scraps; to retire finally to rest under a kitchen-dresser, until it shall be time to renew the weary round once more, and so on hopelessly until a weight of years and worn-out vertebrae shall land him in the workhouse—such is the fate of Gibbs, and of many another hard-worked drudge, whom evil fortune has set in a groove from which he has no longer energy to wrench himself. We have homes for dogs, refuges for decayed ballet-girls; why does not some philanthropic millionaire set up an almshouse for broken-down servants-of-all-work?

Half an hour before dinner a clanging bell summons us all into the drawing-room, a large apartment hung round with dreadful portraits of gentlemen obtrusively clinging to parliamentary documents, hatless and smirking, regardless of awfully black thunder-storms on the horizon; and of guileless ladies in Sunday clothes, artlessly settling flowers in vases, and very red in the face from unsuccessfully attempting to conceal their brazenness under an arch demeanour. Wax flowers under shades occupy the mantelpiece, crazy modelled figures, crumbling and fly-blown, evidently the work of former boarders, stand about in corners, and scraps of old thumbed and tattered music litter the oil-cloth cover of the grand piano.

The painters and sculptors drop in by one, bringing with them a savour of turpentine and clay, and greet each other with remarks upon the fine light they have enjoyed; Mrs. Goram enters in a grand

cap, followed shortly after by Major M'Carthy, bearing two black bottles in one hand, and a plate of plums in the other. Feeling a sudden draught on my left side I turn sharply round to find Gibbs sighing into my ear.

"If you please, sir, will you drink beer at dinner? How many glasses, sir? You see I contract for these things separate like."

Mrs. and Miss Jopkins are heard loudly below, rating Jane and Mary violently, talking of jam puffs and custards in a shrill key, and unlocking a seemingly endless number of creaking cupboards and presses. There is a scuffling from above, followed by a fall and a prolonged howl, after which Signor Merella is descried banging one of the children's heads, previous to an effective and smiling entrance with a background of Madame Merella and babes grouped as much like Medea as may be. At last dinner is ready, and we descend in order of our presumed rank. First, goes Mrs. Goram, as senior boarder, who takes her place on Mrs. Jopkins's immediate right, receiving as she does so a curtsy from that lady, who has by this time developed her tails into three corkscrew curls, has compressed her redundant form into a grey merino garment like a huge pillow-case, and sits, damp, hot, and anxious, behind two great dishes and a pile of plates. Miss Jemima Jopkins occupies the head of another table, her girlish muslin and cerise bows well-nigh concealed by her rival set of dishes, and acknowledges by little simpers the bows of the boarders as they take their seats. Each person produces his private drink in a black bottle or decanter, with ribbon round its neck; and a sepulchral aside to Gibbs, who has been furtively trying to read the newspaper upside down, warns him to remove the covers. All heads are craned towards the steaming viands, the dark-nailed ones unroll frayed little napkins which would be all the better for soap and water, and Mr. M'Grath breathes dyspeptically as he surveys the unappetising meats, indulging his plastic proclivities the while in the manufacture of small black busts of bread. Major M'Carthy frowns ominously, the which his faded wife perceiving, she looks imploringly at Mrs. Goram, who straightway becomes very frisky, bobbing up and down on her chair, indulging in sallies of wondrous playfulness, shaking the bugles of her cap till she fairly rattles like a hail-storm, and employing innumerable innocent

wiles to avert the impending tempest. But the major is not to be so easily appeased. Gibbs's voice pervades the room, asking in sad cadences like some wheezy *Æolian* harp:

"Please, sir, do you take fricasseed rabbit, or lamb and peas?"

And we accept our fate, with its accompanying mess, without so much as a murmur. Not so the major. Amid a silence, broken only by the clattering cutlery and the creaking of Gibbs's boots, he takes up his parable in freezing accents, and confronts Mrs. Jopkins, grown damper and more hot than ever.

"I think, ma'am," he says, "I had cause last week to expostulate concerning Monday's dinner. Stews and hashes are very well, ma'am, and economy, combined with comfort, most desirable; but at the same time a dinner without one piece of new roast meat is what I am not accustomed to. It is economy without comfort, ma'am. Thank you, no, that lamb was overroasted yesterday, and now it's only gristle and string. I will take a little rabbit, a piece with some meat on it, if you please. My dear," this to his wife, "you will also take a portion of rabbit with a little meat on it, or I shall have you ill again, and that will be no economy at all, and a few peas—no, thank you, not the brown ones—out of the other dish. The milk, by-the-bye, ma'am, this morning was by no means as it should be. A trifle too thin and blue, ma'am. I fear you will have to change your milkman, ma'am."

These remarks are received at my end of the table with every demonstration of delight. The dark-nailed ones perform acrobatic antics with their knives, as they shovel down their peas, suggestive of intense joy, accompanied by winks which seem to say, "He's a knowing one, the bulwark of our constitution. She'd starve us but for him, and he won't stand any nonsense." One of them pokes me violently in the ribs to impress on me the importance of the situation, while the young gentleman, whose occupation is his toothpick, all but swallows it, thus very nearly putting an end to himself and his profession at one fell blow. Mrs. Jopkins pants and fumbles with the spoons, murmuring something about, "Very sorry, but some gentlemen are so very difficult to please," and Miss Jemima covers her mamma's retreat by a solemn order to Gibbs to remove the first course, and bring in the tarts and custard.

"Oh, I do dote on custard," remarks Mrs. Goram, with a mincing smirk, "it is such an improvement to a tart."

"I dote on syllabub," interposed Miss Jemima, sentimentally.

"I know you like custard, Mr. M'Grath," continued she of the bugles, "I see it in your eye" (and, indeed, his fishy optic had assumed some sort of life). "Do you remember at the party there was here last summer how you helped yourself to nearly all the trifle, and how Mrs. Gandish complained to Mrs. Jopkins about it?"

"And how Mrs. Gandish left in consequence," put in our hostess. "She was a cross-grained thing, and I was glad she went, for she was always making mischief. Not that I ever interfere with the quarrels of the boarders. The drawing-room's large, I always say, and they can keep to their own ends if they don't want to see each other. Now, there's Mrs. O'Candy, upstairs in her room, fancies she's had some slight, and won't come down to dinner. Jane, take Mrs. O'Candy's dinner up to her, and don't spill the gravy. She'll get over it by-and-bye."

And so I discovered the meaning of whisperings that had lately taken place in the passage, and sundry interruptions at intervals of extremely down-at-heel housemaids with empty plates. There were possibly several sets of recluses away upstairs, self-banished because of the delinquencies of others, who would in time recover their equanimity, and return to the common table. Dinner being over, the major, mollified by custard, presented Mrs. Goram with his dish of plums in return for the salmon of the morning, and launched out into some of his favourite Indian stories, which people listened to with nodding heads, as they do to some favourite old song of which they know every note; and Mrs. Goram was thereby induced to indulge the company with reminiscences of Jamaica, where she had lived most of her life with poor dear Goram. At the sound of his honoured name and the pathetic souvenirs conjured up, the departed gentleman's eye twinkled on her bosom in its gold frame, as though it said, "I'm looking at you. Out of sight, not out of mind; here I watch my faithful relict;" and then, as she heaved a sigh and settled her dress, he sank again under the ribbons, for the bereaved one had put aside the passing cloud, and was skipping really quite nimbly up-stairs to have a game of

cockamaroo with the "meejor" on a dilapidated old board in the back drawing-room. In the course of the evening Mr. M'Grath invited the artists present into his studio at the back of the house, there to smoke the fragrant long clay pipe, whilst admiring his masterpieces. The studio was not a bad one, iron-roofed, with an anteroom reached through a sort of cupboard under the stairs hard by Mrs. Jopkins's awful sanctum, so that whilst appreciating the gems of Grub-streeto-classic art one had the advantage of overhearing that lady's arrangements for the morrow.

If the studio was not bad, the works therein were pitiable to behold. They comprised a few emaciated busts, a statuette or two, a group of lapdogs in wax, and the culminating chef-d'œuvre of Frightened Nymph at the Stream—a consumptive young lady, with preternaturally swollen ankles and no clothes to speak of, endeavouring, without much chance of success, to cover herself up with a very thin pair of arms. The young gentleman with the toothpick thought her very fine, the dark-nailed ones looked at her through grimy fists, measured her with black forefingers, and shook their heads at her with one eye shut up with a hideous leer and corrugated brows. No wonder she looked frightened. Wishing to make myself quite agreeable, I expressed my hopes of seeing the statue in next year's Academy, whereupon they one and all turned on me like an avalanche, and spent the rest of the evening grumbling in concert over the fiendish manners of that institution, the bitter jealousy of its leaders against the denizens of Paget House, and fearful threats of condign vengeance when the much-talked-of day of retribution should at length arrive.

"Justice walks slowly," remarked Mr. M'Grath, in the sententiously classic manner, "but she is firm of foot. In my mind's eye I see her coming towards us holding out a palm-branch, with a rod in the other hand for the chastisement of those unworthy ones. By Jupiter, sir, it would make a fine statue. I'll make a sketch of it to-morrow."

And overcome with his effort at declamation he said not another word, but smoked on moodily, until we all parted at last to stumble over the boots and clothes, having enjoyed, in passing, a view of Mrs. Jopkins slumbering in her arm-chair, with the merino garment a trifle disarrayed,

and her mouth wide open, while Gibbs cleaned knives below, and waited up for the late lodgers.

PETITIONS.

To suffer in silence is, happily, beyond the philosophy of Englishmen. It has always been their wont to air their grievances and put their wants into words, as the likeliest way of getting redress and satisfaction. Pretty liberally exercised at all times, the right of petition was never, perhaps, so freely used as in the troublous days when Crown and Commons contended for mastery. Then, indeed, petitioning became a mania. Fresh grievances turned up every day, not all so real as that impelling the mayor of Plymouth, the grand jurymen of Devon, and certain western merchants to express their righteous indignation at an English admiral allowing a fleet of Turkish pirates to sweep the coasts, and capture vessels before his face. So many petitions were presented in 1640 that above forty parliamentary committees were told off to examine them. In 1642, six thousand patriotic men of Bucks set their hands to a recital of wrongs, winding up with a declaration of their readiness to die in defence of the privileges of parliament; an example quickly imitated by others, including the apprentices and the porters, the latter, boldest of all, vowing that, unless the evils they complained of were remedied without delay, they would proceed to extremities unfit to be named, and make good the saying that necessity knows no law. Even the beggars earned the thanks of the Commons by praying that those noble worthies of the Upper House who concurred with the happy votes of the Commons might separate themselves from the rest, and act and vote as one entire body. Women, too, came to the fore, to express their hatred of papists and prelates, and their horror at the treatment accorded their sisters by the cruel Irish rebels. Led by a brewer's wife, some two or three thousand appeared at the doors of the House with a petition, which was thankfully accepted by Mr. Pym. Twelve months afterwards the ladies cried "Give us that dog Pym!" when they appeared as petitioners for peace, refused to accept the answer of the Commons, pelted the train-bands with brickbats, and were only dispersed by a charge of cavalry. So long as they sided with parliament, the right of the sex to discuss

politics was cheerfully acknowledged, but when there was no longer a king to be annoyed, their old abettors told them to mind their household affairs, and leave the governing of the country to their masters.

When the Restoration came political petitions gave way to personal ones. Charles the Second had hardly set foot in England ere the downpour began. Secretary Nicholas was overwhelmed with appeals from long-suffering royalists, anxious to recover their old positions, recoup their losses, and obtain substantial recognition of their services. King James's embroiderer sued to be re-established, pleading his seventy years, his twenty-one children, and his having saved the king's best cloth of state and his pearl-embroidered carpet from destruction. Master Maddon, who had been prevented from waiting upon his beloved master for orders for twelve years, sought reinstatement as court tailor. An old fellow of ninety-five claimed the office of comorant-keeper by right of appointment by his majesty's grandfather. A quartermaster of artillery asked to be made painter to his majesty, on the strength of the king's father having promised him the office upon seeing a cannon painted by him. Old Master Fawcett reminded the king he had taught him how to use the long-bow, and solicited the place of keeper of the long-bows, having already provided four bows, and all things necessary, in case he and his royal brothers desired to practise an art honoured by kings and maintained by statutes.

One petitioner besought the royal favour because he had, in Charles's young days, taken charge of his batons, paumes, tennis-shoes, and ankle-socks. Another had been taken out of a sick-bed, and carried to Dover Castle, where he was "honoured by being the youngest prisoner in England for his majesty's service." The mayor of Canterbury was encouraged to ask a receivership, by the remembrance of the gracious smiles with which the king had received him when he entered Canterbury.

Robert Thomas claimed consideration on the ground that he had lost his mother, "his majesty's seamstress from his birth." John Southcott prayed to be appointed clerk of the green cloth to his majesty's children, when he should have issue; and Robert Chamberlain, less precise in his demands, merely craved some mark of loyal favour ere he went to his

grave, "being a hundred and ten years old."

It ought not to have been difficult to find George Paterick a place in the royal barge in compensation for sixteen years' service on land and sea, many imprisonments, and banishment from the river whereon he had been wont to ply as waterman. Towers, forced to risk his life on the hazard of the die, and exiled upon winning the cast; Thomas Freebody, who had been banished twice, and imprisoned five times for his loyalty; John Fowler, who had been sent to the West Indies as a present to the barbarous people there, "which penalty he underwent with satisfaction and content;" and the royalist who was hung upon a tree until the soldiers of the proud rebel, Cromwell, thought he was dead, had all fair claims upon the monarch in whose cause they had suffered. Still harder must it have been to be deaf to the supplications of such devoted partisans as Katherine de Luke, Elizabeth Pinckney, Elizabeth Cary, and Mary Graves. To the last-named lady Charles had been indebted for the charger that carried him through Worcester fight, and the steed that bore him from the lost field. She had furnished him with ten armed horsemen, and when all was over, sent Francis Yates to see the royal fugitive safely to the coast. Yates paid for his fidelity with his life, and then Mistress Graves took care of his widow and five children until she lost the remainder of her property through assisting the rising of Sir George Booth. This loyal lady suffered in purse, her fellow-petitioners suffered in person. Dame Pinckney had been imprisoned, beaten with whips, kicked, pulled, and torn. Katherine de Luke had seen her husband die of his wound, her son had been sold to slavery, and she herself, for carrying letters when none else durst run the risk, had been sent to Bridewell to be whipped every other day, and burned with matches to make her betray her trust. After being imprisoned in Windsor Castle, Newgate, and Bridewell, and the Bishop of London's house, Elizabeth Cary was sent to the Mews for carrying the king's proclamation from Oxford to London at the time of his sire's martyrdom, and afterwards taken to Henley-on-Thames, where a gibbet was erected for her execution, but where she escaped with a broken back. How it fared with Mistress Graves we do not know. Katherine de Luke obtained the lease of the waste land in Yorkshire upon which she had set her

mind, and Elizabeth Cary went satisfied away with a pension of forty pounds a year.

The young bachelors of to-day, so often reproached with cherishing anti-matrimonial ideas, may console themselves with the knowledge that they are no worse than their great-grandfathers. They, too, were laggards in love, unless sadly traduced by the ladies of St. Alban's, who, in their so-called petition to the new-come queen of George the Third, expressed a hope that better times were in store for husbandless fair ones, saying: "As subjects are greatly influenced by the example of their sovereign, we have the greatest reason to hope that the matrimonial state will be duly honoured by your majesty's dutiful subjects cheerfully following the royal example; an example too much wanted in this degenerate age, wherein that happy state is made the object of ridicule instead of respect by too many vain, giddy, and dissipated minds. If the riches of a nation consist in its populousness, this happy country will too soon become poor, whilst the lawful means to continue posterity are either shackled by the restraint of mistaken laws, or despised by those who respect none. But as every virtuous and commendable action is encouraged by your royal consort, and your own noble sentiments and conduct, we hope this example will be duly followed by your majesty's loyal subjects." Others, besides the St. Alban's ladies, had faith in the wonder-working power of royal example, even to believing Fashion itself could be controlled by advice, if the advice came from the throne. Although King George had failed to keep wigs upon his subjects' heads, when the shoestring threatened to oust the buckle from its pride of place, the alarmed buckle-makers called upon royalty to save their trade from annihilation, and prevent the miseries, emigrations, and other horrible consequences which must inevitably ensue. Every member of the royal family was in turn entreated to come to the rescue. The buckle-makers of Birmingham, Walsall, and Wolverhampton relied especially upon the intervention of the Prince of Wales. Sheridan espoused their cause, introduced the representatives of the three towns to the prince, and highly extolled their address. One paragraph, which he declared to be perfect, ran thus: "When Fashion, instead of foreign or unprofitable ornaments, wears and consumes the manu-

factures of this country, she puts on a more engaging form, and becomes Patriotism. When Taste, at the same time and by the same means that she decorates the persons of the rich, clothes and fills the naked and hungry poor, she deserves a worthier appellation, and may be styled Humanity. We make no doubt but your royal highness will prefer the blessings of the starving manufacturers to the encomiums of the drawing-rooms." The saddest of these appeals on behalf of the shoe-buckle was that addressed by the fraternity in London and Westminster to the Duke of York, praying him to discourage the wearing of shoestrings by officers and gentlemen, and save a staple manufacture, doing an incredible business abroad, from being ruined by ribbon, leather, and whipcord. After reminding the duke that an immense number of people had spent the best part of their lives in buckle-making, and formed connexions, and increased their families, in dependence upon it, the petitioners grew eloquent in dilating upon the sad results of the cruel capriciousness of Fashion: "The nuptial tie, pitifully relaxed by reiterated sorrows; the children cry louder and more vehemently for food; the husband unmanned, his wonted courage fails; the wife, more delicately sensible, is not able to resist one of the obtruding woes which crowd upon her mind. Few friends before! less than ever now! Demands come quickest upon the most needy, often reminded of their bereaved trade, and no philosopher's stone to smooth the creditor's brow!" Springing suddenly from despair to jubilation, they went on: "Now spread wide the happy cause! The prospect changes! Hope, with cheering looks, advances. A letter from the trade at large informs them of our appeal to your royal highness. Instantly they assemble, and congratulate each other they have so glorious a source of expectation. Hope, with magic power, appeases their hunger, removes their despondency, makes the manufacturer's heart dance with joy; and the Duke and Duchess of York echoes in their cups, toast after toast!" There was no withstanding such pathetic appeals; the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Clarence forbade any member of their households using strings, and at the next drawing-room the buckle was again in the ascendant. But its reign was only prolonged a little while; Fashion had decreed its fall, and not all the king's sons could set it up again.

When George the Third was king, the aldermen and common councilmen of London had souls above mere City matters. Constituting themselves irresponsible advisers of the Crown, they badgered their sovereign whenever a chance offered for displaying their "patriotism." In their hands the petition became a very effective weapon of annoyance. In 1769, they petitioned his majesty to dissolve parliament, and indignant at no notice being taken of their demand, drew up an "Address, Remonstrance, and Petition" for presentation at St. James's. This was so strongly worded that the recorder refused to have anything to do with it, the common-serjeant broke down in reading it, and the town-clerk had great difficulty in finishing the task for his brother official. It says something for the king's self-control that he allowed such a document to be read to the end. The mildest-mannered of monarchs might well have lost his equanimity at being told that his legislators were corrupt and their proceedings illegal, that he himself was a slave to a secret and malignant influence, and bent upon imitating the conduct which had cost two of his predecessors their crowns. Couched throughout in equally offensive language this extraordinary petition finished thus: "The misdeeds of your ministers, in violating the freedom of election, and depraving the noble constitution of parliament, are notorious, as well as subversive of the fundamental laws and liberties of the realm; and since your majesty is, both in honour and justice, obliged invariably to preserve them according to the oath made to God and your subjects, at your coronation, we, your remonstrants, assure ourselves that your majesty will restore the constitutional government and quiet of your people, by dissolving this parliament, and removing these evil ministers for ever from your councils." When the town-clerk had done his part, King George told the bold citizens their address was disrespectful to himself, injurious to his parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution, and so dismissed them. The obnoxious petition was afterwards ordered to be laid on the table of the House of Commons, and voted to be unwarrantable, and tending to destroy the allegiance of the subject, the vote being followed by a joint address from the two Houses to the king, severely censuring the City remonstrances. The remonstrants thereupon again met in common hall, and adopted a second address, de-

claring the royal criticism of the first to be opposed to the principles of the constitution, and the result of invidious attempts of evil councillors to perplex, confound, and shake the rights of the people. Upon the 23rd of May, 1770, Lord Mayor Beckford, attended by a number of aldermen and common councilmen, proceeded to St. James's. The king sat upon his throne, sceptre in hand, to hear what his troublesome remonstrants had to say. When he had heard, he replied that his sentiments remained unaltered, and that he should ill-deserve to be considered the father of his people, if he suffered himself to make such a use of his prerogative as was inconsistent with the interests, and dangerous to the constitution, of the kingdom. Then to the astonishment of his majesty, and the consternation of the court, the lord mayor delivered himself of the "great speech to the king," which was to make his name famous in civic story. The spirit of old England, may, as Chatham said, have spoken on that never-to-be-forgotten day, but whether the spirit of old England spoke the speech emblazoned on the Guildhall statue is very doubtful. Horne Tooke averred that Beckford was so flurried that he could remember nothing of it, and as it was necessary a speech of some sort should be printed for public edification, he supplied the want.

Had the discontented Londoners known how to be plain without being insulting, Farmer George would assuredly have condoned any little irregularity of form. When brave Colonel Ottway, tired of seeing his juniors promoted over his head, got the chaplain of his regiment to write a petition for him, he demurred at the concluding words, "and your petitioner will ever pray," as fit only for a parson, and insisted upon ending in his own way, "and your petitioner will ever fight." This departure from ordinary rule so amused the king, that he took care the veteran was gazetted to the first vacant command. More irregular still was the petition sent to Queen Victoria not long ago from Newcastle gaol, by the self-styled Countess of Derwentwater. "O Queen! mercy and justice is thy mission on earth, and why allow one inoffensive heir of Derwentwater to be falsely incarcerated, shut up for seven months, languishing, and deprived of even a breath of fresh air? What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Are tyranny, torture, and wrong the civil rights of the people thou

rulest? I have kept all thy laws diligently. O queen! listen. It is thy prerogative to command, 'Let right be done!' The crowns have fallen lately from the regal heads of several princes in Europe, and the greatest monarch that ever held the English sceptre looked back and moralised, and her majesty exclaimed, 'Millions of money for moments of time!'

Stranger petitions than that of the Derwentwater claimant have issued from prison cells. Bacon thought it worth recording that a certain Irish rebel was such a stickler for precedent as to petition he might be hanged with a withe instead of a halter, because rebels had hitherto been so despatched. What would the philosopher have said to a reprieved convict soliciting that he might be executed, not because he was tired of life, but merely to spare his sovereign annoyance? Such an instance of loyalty occurred in 1640, when Charles the First received the following petition: "Whereas your majesty's petitioner hath understood of a great discontent in many of your majesty's subjects at the gracious mercy your majesty was freely pleased to show upon your petitioner, by suspending the sentence of death pronounced against your petitioner. These are humbly to beseech your majesty rather to remit your petitioner to their mercies that are discontented, than to let him live the subject of so great a discontent in your people against your majesty; for it hath pleased God to give me grace to desire with the prophets, 'That if this storm be raised for me, I may be cast into the sea, that others may avoid the tempest.' This is, most sacred sovereign, the petition of him that should esteem his blood well shed, to cement the breach between your majesty and your subjects. —John Goodman."

In 1723, Jonathan Wild, weary of his merits remaining unrecognised by the City authorities, sought to bring the lord mayor and the court of aldermen to a proper sense of what was due to him, by sending in a petition, setting forth how he had been at great trouble and charge in apprehending and convicting divers felons for returning from transportation before their time; how he had never received any reward for his services that way; and praying that those services might be requited by making him a freeman of their honourable city. The infamous thief-maker and thief-betrayer did not obtain his wished-for freedom. Had he been successful he would not have enjoyed it long, seeing that, in

1725, as many of his pupils had done before him, he—

In his shoes
Died of a noose,
That he got at Tyburn tree.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c.

CHAPTER XLVII. AFTER THE FIGHT.

I KNEW him at once, though he was certainly altered. He looked very much older, and was strangely dressed in the glazed hat and shabby, many-caped drab coat of a hackney-coachman. A beard of some days' growth gave his chin something the look of a white scrubbing-brush with its bristles much worn. His appearance altogether was most neglected, soiled, and even squalid. He had been one of the Baker's chief backers I was informed, and was a considerable winner by the result of the battle. There was a large party with him of noblemen and gentlemen, it was rumoured—though, indeed, they scarcely seemed to be such. They were handing him various sums, in payment, I presumed, of the bets they had lost. They had no doubt been supporters of the defeated Mudlark. His lordship held in his dirty hands—which trembled a good deal, and seemed bossy about the joints with gouty knots and swellings—a crumpled bundle of banknotes. He was by no means sober, and from time to time ejaculated raucous shouts and inarticulate sounds of triumph. He was still cheering on the Baker to further efforts, and hurling maledictions at the head of Gipsy Joe. Now and then he struck out with his arm wildly in the air, swayed to and fro, elbowing the crowd, and seemed trying to execute some jubilant dance of a Red Indian pattern, uttering the while a hideous war-whoop. But for the support of the ropes of the ring, he would certainly have fallen prostrate on the sward.

"Lord Overbury," I whispered in Tony's ear, as I grasped his arm.

"Impossible! Why, the man's mad!" And, indeed, he might well have thought so. But then he had never seen his lordship before, as I had.

We had been hustled by the crowd towards Jack Rumsey's corner of the ring. There was much pressing forward to gain a nearer view of that champion. But he was now muffled up for departure, with a cold bandage round his left hand, which had suffered much from frequent sharp

collision with the bones of the Mudlark's face. A handkerchief enfolded his forehead also, and a black patch of plaster concealed his cut lip. In his heavy "box" coat and swathing "Belcher" he had certainly abandoned all resemblance to the Apollo. He looked, indeed, a veritable ruffian.

"Good day, my lord, and thankee for all you've done for I," he said, touching his forehead respectfully. He was in his way a hero perhaps; but he was a hind too.

His lordship said nothing intelligible in reply, unless it was an imprecation. But he stared, laughed, staggered, and then thrust several of his bank-notes into the raw, battered, and puffed right hand of the pugilist.

There had been some jeering at the nobleman. But this was silenced now. It was perceived that he was the patron and friend of the Baker. There arose something of a cheer for him. He received it with supreme indifference.

The throng was now thinning rapidly. The spectators were departing on their homeward ways in all directions, stretching out in long lines over the open country like rays diverging from a star's centre. There was the hum of laughter and conversation in the air; quite in the distance a key-bugle, in the hands of an infirm performer seated on the top of a four-horse coach, emitted strange discords. Carts and carriages were climbing the steep sides of the down to regain the high road to Steepleborough. Gradually Chingley Bottom was regaining its accustomed look of extreme seclusion and tranquillity, with trampled grass, littered paper, and broken bottles, the only evidences of the recent fray and tumult. In an hour or two the scared hares and rabbits might safely resume possession of it.

Lord Overbury was left almost alone. He was standing rubbing his rough chin, muttering to himself, hiccuping, and now and then looking round him with lustreless drowsy eyes in a confused way, as though scarcely conscious of where he was, or of what had happened. Tony and I watched him from a little distance curiously, and with, on Tony's part, a sort of amazed repugnance. Mr. Jobling had gone in quest of his cob and chaise.

Suddenly a bank-note fluttered out of his lordship's hand, and was borne by the wind almost to my feet. I picked it up, and carried it to him.

"Something you've dropped."

He had difficulty in understanding me. But he took the note, almost snatching it from me.

"I didn't bet with you, did I? You're not one of the Mudlark's backers? Dropped it, did I? Well, thankee, my lad. 'Twas honest to give it up, anyhow. But—I hadn't missed it. What a fool you were not to keep it! That's what I should have done in your case."

He spoke very thickly, interlarding oaths and laughs in his old way. Suddenly he stopped, and looked intently in my face. For a moment his maltreated senses seemed struggling to break through the sottish fog that enveloped and prisoned them. He made an effort to stand firmly, and, as it seemed to me, to reflect and remember. But his inebriety was too complete. He failed to recognise me, although certainly a flash of intelligence had for a second illumined his dull and darkened faculties. He glanced at me, and then at Tony, and then, waving aloft a flaccid hand, said, "I get to Chingley turnpike-gate over that down, I think!" stumbled away, cramming his bank-notes into his coat-pocket, and muttering thickly—his words, if, indeed, he uttered any, being probably independent of thought, and possessed of no clear meaning even to himself.

Some three hundred yards away from us, when he was half-way up the grassy slope of the down, he stopped, turned, shouted, and shook his clenched fist in the air. We failed to comprehend the significance of this proceeding, and decided that it had none.

"He is a satyr, and no mistake," said Tony; "and a very inferior specimen of that curious species. I seem to breathe more freely now he's gone. And he's Lord Overbury; and the husband of your Rosetta!"

My Rosetta, indeed! But I said nothing.

Mr. Jobling reappeared.

"We'll not go up to Hickley's house, this journey, I think, my lads. He's got the place full with a regular noisy party, from all I can hear. So we'd best get towards home. We shall be none too early as 'tis. Come; another sup of the strong beer. There's plenty yet in the stone bottle. It's bound to hold a gallon. Well, 'twas a pretty fight, wasn't it, young gentlemen? and worth coming all the way from London to see. That's my opinion on't. A main pretty fight; and our man won. I be as pleased as pleased. Not for

the trifle of money I'd put on young Jack. That says nothing. But for the honour of the county. I'll go bail those Portsmouth chaps will look down their noses when they come to hear on't. They made sure the Mudlark was going to have it all's own way. But young Jack put it well into un. Gave un a main hiding. That's what I call it. Gipsy Joe wunt scarce be able to see out of s head for a vortnight or more. Well done, young Jack! I always thought un a sprack young fellow. Not that he was e'er a morsel of use on my farm. Never did, not to say, a stroke of work. But he knows how to use his fists anyways. And he won the fight!"

The wind blew sharply from the east as we drove homeward. The farmer was in high spirits, and talked incessantly. It was clear that the great combat in Chingley Bottom had supplied him with a topic of conversation that would last him for a long time to come. I felt sure that after it had seemed to every one else perfectly threadbare, exhausted, and done with, Mr. Jobling would still now and then reproduce it, and find it fresh, and new, and full of interest. Tony said little. He was very tired, I think, and shivered much from the coldness of the wind, or from nervous reaction after so much excitement.

"Well, and who won?" asked my uncle as we re-entered the farm-house.

"Our side."

He laughed and waved his newspaper in the air. My mother was very glad to see us safe home again. The fight was nothing to her; but for my uncle's entertainment—and he was certainly interested in the matter—we supplied him with a detailed account of our adventures, including our meeting with old Hickley, whom he well remembered, though, he said, he had not seen him for some years.

Tony withdrew early that night I remember. He was quite worn out. I found my mother noting compassionately his jaded looks.

"Duke," she said, "there can be no need for your friend's going back with you."

My holiday was coming to an end. Already I had been making preparations for my return to town.

"He is far from well. He wants more rest and fresh air. He is happy here, I think; and I'm sure we will do all we may to make him happy, and to take care of him. Why should he not stay; for a while, at any rate?"

I knew of no reason why. Indeed, I thought, with my mother, that it would be better for him to stay until he gained in strength and health. I was well assured he could not be left in tenderer or more heedful hands. There was nothing calling for his return to town very immediately. He had no engagements to fulfil. Only, as I stated, I had hopes of securing him work in the studio of Sir George Nightingale.

"Ah! You have seen Sir George Nightingale?" She spoke with some eagerness. "I remember now. You mentioned it in one of your letters; and he—Sir George, I mean—received you well, Duke; he was kind to you."

"He was very kind. He acknowledged me at once as a relation. Am I nearly related to him?"

"He is only a distant relation of yours—very distant," my uncle interposed rather sharply. He had been reading the newspaper, holding it away from him, at arm's length, with a candle between it and him. His sight was weakening, and he read with difficulty; but he was still a devoted student of our county journal. He especially liked, I think, to con over the quotations of the prices in Steepleborough corn market; though as he punctually attended there every Wednesday he must have possessed quite as much information on the subject as the editor of the paper. Still it was somehow pleasant to him to have his knowledge confirmed by the press. It was almost like seeing himself in print.

"He was very kind to me in any case," I said.

"I hope you did not urge any claims to his kindness?" He laid down his newspaper, put the candle from him, and straightened himself in his chair as he spoke.

"No, certainly; I made no claim upon him."

"That's well. These great men, you see—and Sir George, I suppose, is held to be a great man, not merely by himself, but by others"—he stopped to take snuff, and then abandoned the subject of his discourse almost as though he had forgotten what he intended to say. His tone had been unusually and unreasonably acrid, I thought.

"Lord Overbury was at the fight," I mentioned, after a pause, changing the subject.

"I did not know he was in England," my uncle said, quietly. "Indeed, I heard at market, quite lately, that his embarrass-

ments would prevent his ever reappearing in this country. He has not been seen about here for many a long day. He has not been missed, however. I wonder the estate has not been sold. It's as much as his trustees can do, I understand, to pay the interest on the mortgages. So he was at the fight, was he? He was always a great patron of the ring."

Tony was disinclined to allow me to return to London alone. It was unfair, he said, that I should go back to work while he idled and enjoyed himself in the country. He yielded at length, however, rather to my mother's entreaties than to mine. She had acquired considerable influence over him, though she exercised it in the gentlest and tenderest way.

"You know, Duke, I never saw my own mother, to remember her," he said one day. "But it seems to me she must have been something like yours. It's wonderful what a sort of home-like feeling this house has for me. I've only known it really for a very few weeks, and yet I seem to have lived here all my life. It's due, of course, to your mother's exceeding kindness to me. And your uncle too, I mustn't leave him out. He's wonderfully good to me, and doesn't mind in the least the rubbish and nonsense I sometimes talk. Really, you know, all things considered, I'm a most fortunate young fellow. I've done nothing to deserve the kindness people—all sorts of people—show me. I won't speak of you, old fellow because if I once begin I shan't know when to leave off. I wish very much I could go back to London with you, and recommence hard work again. There are so many things I intend to do: to assist Sir George, and revolutionise portrait - painting, among others. But, as you say, being here, perhaps it's as well to stay, and grow quite well and strong again. I shall soon shake off this ridiculous feeling of illness, and rejoin you in London."

Poor Tony! It was Death's secure grasp he was talking so lightly of shaking off. He knew nothing of the peril he was in. Nor, indeed, did I at that time. He was so young, and to me, then, death seemed only the fate of the old: an event so remote from youthful years as to be not worth taking into account. At twenty or so life seems to have no limits. My mother's eyes, I think, had been more far-seeing and observant: or she, perhaps, rather feared than knew that my poor boy-friend was seriously threatened. She said no word upon the subject, yet I noted a watchful

foreboding in her eyes when they rested upon Tony. It may be that, almost unconsciously, she discerned upon his face signs as fatally significant of coming doom as the "blaze" of white paint to be seen upon certain forest trees, marking them out as the early prey of the woodman's axe.

I have stated that he knew nothing of his peril, and generally this seemed so. He talked in full faith of his certain and speedy recovery. Yet something he once said suggested that he entertained some vague misgiving on the subject.

He was sketching from memory the scene in Chingley Bottom, and was loud in his admiration of the graceful proportions, the skill, and strength of our champion the Baker.

"Yet it seemed to me throughout," he said, "that his life was in extreme danger. It was quite true what the country folks about us said. One blow from Gipsy Joe's brawny fist would surely have killed him. The blow was never fairly struck—Jack was far too clever and nimble to give the Mudlark the chance. But if it had been! There would have been an end for ever of poor Jack. And really, you know, we're all nearer death than we ever suppose, even though we don't stand up in the ring against such muscular monsters as Gipsy Joe."

It was a day or two after this, and the eve of my return to London.

"Duke, do you think you're lawyer enough to draw a short will?" he inquired.

I said I thought I was, provided it was of a simple nature, as well as short.

"Oh, it's simple enough. Because I'm to be the testator, and I've little enough to dispose of as you know. Still there's just this: the money in my uncle's hands, that belongs to me. It seems absurd, no doubt, my making a will. It looks pretentious almost, as though I affected to be possessed of enormous wealth. I always picture to myself a testator as an old chap sitting up in bed in a nightcap, and, at the point of death, making testamentary arrangements that will bitterly annoy all his kinsfolk. Still I don't know that even at my age it isn't a good and prudent sort of thing to do, rather than not. What do you say?"

I said that it was certainly a good and prudent thing to do.

"A line will be almost enough, I should think. 'I give everything to poor Rachel, absolutely.' Isn't that the right word? I'm only a year or two older than she is;

but she may survive me. Who knows? Women are generally longer lived than men, I believe. They lead such quiet, sober, steady lives, you see. The poor child, though, has not had a very happy time of it hitherto, I fear. I give her everything, and appoint her sole executrix. That's rightly put, isn't it? Of course there ought to be a thumping legacy for you, old fellow; and something——"

I would not allow him to say a word more on that head. I was vexed at his thinking for a moment of a bequest to me to the prejudice of his cousin. I urged him almost peremptorily to leave everything to her.

"You grow quite warm about it, Duke," he said, laughingly. "But I dare say you're right; and I'm glad to see you've such a firm, stern, lawyer-like way of stating your opinion. It's very bracing to a weak client. Yes, everything to poor dear Rachel; let it be so. I owe her very much. She's been quite a sister to me. At least, I'm sure if I had ever been blessed with a sister—I never have been, as you know—she would have been to me just what Rachel is. She's a dear, good little soul, thinking of everybody before herself; and what a dull secluded life she's been leading in that dreary old house in Golden-square! She's been shut up like a fresh lily in a musty law book, perfuming its stupid pages, but hidden, crushed, sacrificed. So it always seemed to me. She looked very pale and sad, I thought, the last time I saw her. But she wouldn't own to being unhappy, except about her father." He was silent for some moments, musing over Rachel, but very calmly I judged—not as a lover would. "Yes," he resumed presently, "everything I have must go to her of course."

Still he did not regard the will very seriously; it was in his eyes a sort of "merry bond."

I made a rough draft, and then a fair copy of it. I was surprised at my own skill. The document had a due legal and formal flavour; and there was no question but that it completely carried out the testator's intentions, and was thoroughly valid. It was executed with all proper

ceremonies. I was careful that my mother and my uncle should add their names to mine as witnesses. They were gratified, I think, at the evidence afforded of my professional aptitude; and they viewed the matter with becoming gravity. As they put on their glasses and affixed their signatures to the paper their manner had something about it quite solemn even to sadness. Tony restrained all inclination towards jesting; his face wore a thoughtful and impressed look as he sealed up and delivered the will to my mother, and asked her if she would kindly take charge of it for him. She pressed his hand very tenderly, I noticed, as she received the little packet from him. And presently she turned away, so that he might not see, perhaps, that there were tears in her eyes.

"It's odd, old fellow," he said to me afterwards, with a sigh, "that making one's will should seem so like signing one's death warrant. But it is so. I feel it so; and they, I could see, did so too. And you feel it also, I'm pretty sure. Yet it's a mere form. What superstitious creatures we all are. A will made by one of my age. You know it's really more of a joke than anything else." But he sighed as he spoke. "Good-night, my dear Duke, and many thanks, once more, for all you've done for me. I shall soon rejoin you in London."

The next morning I returned to town, and resumed tenancy of my lodgings in Featherstone-buildings.

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